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A QUATERNION.

BY WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING.

I. THE DULL HEARER.

“And a part of the seed fell on stony ground.”

I never enter there,
I do not love the air,
The preacher I mistrust,
Tedious and dry as dust.

To hear the Scripture read
I feel a prudent dread;
Give me some lively book,
That has a modern look.

And worst of all, I rate
The parson's fallen state,
Who being no longer clerk,
Is paid, and does not work.

How great and strong he looks,
It never came of books,
And wasting midnight oil,
Holy with learning's toil.

And if in church he says
Those same things all his days,
Must I sleep nodding there,
And blame his sinful prayer?

Are those my mates who sit,
And hear his Hebrew wit;
Are their loud, homely hymns,
The song of seraphims?

Give me a frosty sky,
With stars set up on high;

Give me the godless air
That bloweth anywhere ;

Give me the burning wood,
Where God and Moses stood,
As some old fable tells,
And where He fabled—dwells.

And shut the church so fine
And feeble, in decline,
And lock me out of it,
And hide the bible-wit !

II. THE BIRTHDAY PIECE.

If the winter skies be o'er us,
And the winter months before us,
When the tempest boreal falling
Hurls his icy bolts appalling,
Let us yet thy soul inherit,
Equable and nice in spirit,
Who, in turbulent December,
With still peace, we can remember.

Muses should thy birthday reckon,
As to one, their foretastes beckon,
Who in thought and action never,
Could the right from self dis sever ;
Taken with no serpent charming,
By no tyranny's alarming ;
From thy sure conviction better
Than from blurred tradition's fetter,
Would the State such deeds might cherish,
And her liberties ne'er perish.

Age must dart no frost to harm thee,
Fell reversals ne'er alarm thee,
Having that within thy being,
Yet the good in evil seeing ;—

Faithful heart, and faithful doing,
Bring life's forces humbly suing.

Now, we bid the dear Penates,
Inward guardians with whom Fate is,
And the Lar whose altar flaming,
From thy household, merits naming ;
And Vertumnus we solicit,
Whose return brings no deficit,
Bacchus with his ivy-thyrses,
And Pomona's friendly verses,
(Or what other joys may be
Pouring from antiquity);—
Let them o'er thy roof displaying
Happiest stars, stand brightly raying ;
In thy thought poetic splendor,
This late age spontaneous render,—
Fit for thee and fit for thine,
Shed o'er acts of love divine.

III. A DIRGE FOR THE DEAD.

Called from this trance of life—the dream of pain,
Thy soul, no more this thirsting day, shall see,
The lonely hour, the chill and sobbing rain,—
Nor hear that trace of far-off melody,
That sometime taught there was another shore,
Where softly breaks a wave darkling no more.

I saw from out that life, which was *not* life,
A shadow from thy soul—reversed on time ;
I would improve that thought, and cease this strife,
With inconclusive fictions past their prime,—
And life, and hope, and joy, once my despair,
How still your fading sunshine touched the air.

Forsaken, on the plain the warrior sinks,
Swells past the ruddy tide that bore him on ;
Afar, in distant vales the home he thinks,

Ne'er knows him more, magnificently gone,
His love, her pallid hope assenting sees,
Shiver with anguish, in the cruel breeze.

IV. SPRING ON THE ISLAND.

Come to my heart, thou first and spring sunshine,
Warm a chilled frame where wintry winds o'erlay
Some clusters of an old and famous vine,
Whose dancing tendrils frost had pruned away.

Here as I sit, and hear the withered grass,
While waves the thorn-bush to the swift March-wind,
Oh how I wish my weary life could pass
With this fresh air, nor leave its trace behind !

And how I prayed that I could die like thee,
Thou first spring sunshine on a loved one's heart,
Hear the dark breeze hiss by yon stricken tree,
Where every leaf is dead, and every part,—

Fixed by transfusion of a killing frost,
Icy and cold must now forsaken stand,
Wrecked like my past, upon a rock-bound coast,
Snapt by the finger of the death-king's hand.

Come to this weary breast, thou sunshine dear,
For thou and I are now the same to all,
And have for the indifferent a cheer,
And o'er the beaches lone unwelcomed fall.

In yon far hills that line the water blue,
In those few pines that dot the neighbor strand,
And in that proud and overarching view,
That lifts our souls above the lovely land :

In withered grasses, on the wide-spread moor,
Whereon the prickly furze, and tall reeds grew,
And where the sluggish creek pervades the floor
With slow pulsation, old yet ever new :

And in those fitful pauses of the blast,
And in the tall dark spars that touch the sky,
What find I there ?—that joy has speedier past,
Than all those winds, to lifelong misery.

O God, why wert thou God—to thus o'ergo
My soul in torture, like this sunshine sere ?—
Away, I feel the cold March breezes blow,
And little waves are sparkling bright and clear.

THE IDEA OF THE VENUS.

BY H. K. JONES.

Venus is beauty, and her offspring is love. And there has been given beneath the sun no age in human history in which this goddess has not been adored. All generations have erected statues and temples in this worship, and she has been celebrated in their music, and poesy, and sculpture and painting—and by the praise and adoration of all human hearts.

This subject has therefore been the preferred and most fertile theme of art from the most ancient times.

Venus is beauty, and beauty has two most general orders—immortal and mortal, or spiritual and natural—or celestial and terrestrial—and accordingly in ancient mythologic science and art, of which we may assume the Greek wisdom to afford the purest type: there are two Venuses, the celestial and the terrestrial.

These are both the daughters of Jove. All beauty is of divine *paternity*. In the poetic myth, these are respectively the daughters of Jupiter and Harmonia, and of Jupiter and Dione. The one of supermundane, the other of mundane *maternity*. But universally and in philosophic myth, the Venus, in the soul's participation—love, is born of the foam or spray of the sea.

The idea of this philosophic myth is the key to the whole subject in its unity and universality. The sea is the symbol and representative of life, in that it is the deep that moveth from